



**Republicans
for Bulgaria**

Pavel Valnev



Pavel Valnev and his brother Rumen are Bulgarian-American entrepreneurs who own a freight transportation business in Chicago, IL, which they built from scratch in a highly competitive environment.

A strong believer in the importance of a stable, prosperous, and democratic Balkans, Mr. Valnev has made strategic investments in various countries in Southeast Europe in order to further regional integration and prepare their economies for full membership in the European Union. His firms have remained commercially inactive in Bulgaria and Mr. Valnev's only initiative in Bulgaria to date has been the founding and operation of Bulgaria International Television (BiT), which was an independent television station that broadcast simultaneously from Chicago, IL, and Sofia, Bulgaria, from 2013 until 2018.

BiT was permanently closed because of the severe challenges associated with media freedom in Bulgaria, which is ranked 111th in the world by Reporters without Borders, behind all of its neighbors and on par with many countries that Freedom House defines as non-democratic. Operating from the United States and on the basis of Western media standards, BiT's mission was to bring objective and independent coverage to Bulgaria's centralized and often corrupt media landscape.

Despite this environment, BiT was able to rank fourth in terms of viewer trust, competing successfully with oligarchic and Russian-backed media, as well as outlets that receive billions of leva of support from the state budget. Quickly recognizing BiT

*office@republikanci.bg
www.republikanci.bg*



**Republicans
for Bulgaria**

as a threat to the status quo, the political-advertising cartel in Bulgaria moved quickly to starve BiT of advertising revenues. Mr. Valnev refused to compromise its independent editorial policies and opted to close BIT in early 2018 rather than see it transformed into a tool suppressing media freedom and democratic development in Bulgaria.

In addition to his commercial endeavors in the United States and Southeast Europe, Mr. Valnev is Deputy Chairman of the Republicans for Bulgaria political party, which promotes Western values in Bulgaria, ending endemic corruption, making Bulgaria a more active contributor to the EU and NATO, and countering Russian and Chinese malign influence throughout Europe.



Why Putin Is Using a Gas Line to Finance His Corrupt Regime



January 26, 2021 *Topic:* Security *Region:* Eurasia *Tags:* Russia, Vladimir Putin, TurkStream, Pipeline, Gas

The consequence of being cut off from the world's largest and most dynamic economy is bad enough, but perhaps equally damaging is the pariah status associated with being on the wrong end of Washington's Treasury Department.

By using this website, you agree to our use of cookies. This use includes personalization of content and ads, and traffic analytics.

by Tsvetan Tsvetanov Pavel Valnev

The massive tubes that stretch across Bulgaria, at first glance, appear benign. Traveling like an earthworm both beneath the soil and over land, the so-called Balkan Stream gas pipeline futilely tries to avoid drawing attention to itself. This pipeline, though, is not akin to an earthworm burrowing its way through the Balkans, but a snake—one with deadly venom.

If you haven't heard of the Balkan Stream, then chances are you know this pipeline by its proper name, TurkStream, which originates in Russia, runs under the Black Sea, emerges in Turkey and then on to Bulgaria. Renaming the pipeline was a Potemkin effort by Bulgarian prime minister Boyko Borisov to camouflage its connection to the Russian pipe, the inauguration of which would subject Bulgaria to Russian president Vladimir Putin's whims and isolate my country from the democratic West.

That is because the United States intends to sanction anything that touches TurkStream, and for good reason as the pipeline's sole mission is to cripple Putin's enemies and finance his corrupt regime. The fact that TurkStream infrastructure has penetrated Bulgaria is an undeniable victory for the Kremlin—but the victory can be made hollow. In March 2021, the Bulgarians will head to the polls and to avoid future sanctions, reject Putin's nefarious aims, and stand with our European and U.S. allies, the next governing coalition in Sofia must ensure that the Bulgarian section of TurkStream will never carry Russian gas.

Doing so would bring manifest benefits, with one of the most important being the avoidance of U.S. sanctions. While the penalties would likely be placed on individuals or entities that facilitated TurkStream's construction, the whole country would suffer. Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

made that much clear over the summer when the State Department updated its sanctions guidance to target TurkStream.

“It’s a clear warning to companies aiding and abetting Russia’s malign influence projects will not be tolerated,” Pompeo said in July. “Get out now, or risk the consequences.”

The consequence of being cut off from the world’s largest and most dynamic economy is bad enough, but perhaps equally damaging is the pariah status associated with being on the wrong end of Washington’s Treasury Department. When investors and benefactors think of U.S. sanctions, countries that come to their minds include Belarus, Venezuela and North Korea.

Being in the same league as those countries offers Bulgaria nothing, just like TurkStream. Putin’s pipeline fails to meet even the lowest threshold that should be applied to new energy projects in a country like Bulgaria, which is to diversify energy supply. Currently, more than 75 percent of Bulgaria’s natural gas imports come from Russia, and TurkStream would only deepen that dependence, allowing Putin to cut off Bulgaria’s energy supply at will. As Borisov embraces TurkStream, he apparently is rejecting a pipeline that would connect Bulgaria to a Greek Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal that would allow Bulgaria to more easily access LNG from countries like the United States, which is increasingly shipping gas to Europe.

What makes this frustrating predicament even more troubling is that Borisov has invited this reputational and economic risk with no reward in sight—at least not for the Bulgarian people. The only conclusion one can draw is that Borisov is acting as an accomplice in Putin’s gambit to impoverish his enemies and install a monopoly on European gas supplies. Like some of Putin’s other pipeline projects, TurkStream is notable not for the countries through which it runs, but the one it avoids: Ukraine.

By using this website, you agree to our use of cookies. This use includes personalization of content and ads, and traffic analytics.

At the moment, Russia relies on much of Ukraine's existing infrastructure to send its natural gas to European markets. But Putin is also working to destroy Ukraine by illegally occupying its territory and supporting an insurgency in the country. For Putin, the goal of TurkStream is to punish and pauperize Ukraine. The fact that he can spread various pipeline construction contracts to his cronies is simply an added benefit. By inviting TurkStream into Bulgaria, Borisov has fed this rampant corruption while working against the transatlantic goal of strengthening Ukraine and its institutions as Kyiv resists Putin's conquest.

The best and easiest way to ensure that Putin's harmful ambitions are foiled is for the next Bulgarian government to ban Russian gas from ever entering the new pipeline. Doing so will help Bulgaria stave off sanctions, forge closer ties with the United States and its friends in the EU and show that it won't stand for Putin's bullying. In essence, this pipeline has turned Bulgaria's coming elections into a referendum on whether Bulgaria should assist Putin in waging economic warfare against Russia's neighbors. Fortunately, that question has an easy answer.

Tsvetan Tsvetanov is the chairman of the Republicans for Bulgaria, Chairman of the Euro-Atlantic Security Center (EASC) in Sofia, Bulgaria, and was Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria 2009-2013.

Pavel Valnev is the deputy chairman of Republicans for Bulgaria.

Image: Reuters

© Copyright 2021 Center for the National Interest All Rights Reserved

By using this website, you agree to our use of cookies. This use includes personalization of content and ads, and traffic analytics.

EUROPE OPINION

BULGARIA MUST SHOW LEADERSHIP IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

BY TSVETAN TSVETANOV . PAVEL VALNEV .



Skopje, Macedonia. Photo via Pixabay.

DECEMBER 14, 2020

I

t was an exercise in political expediency and populism. In November, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov's GERB government used its status as leaders of a European Union member state to veto neighboring Republic of North Macedonia's bid to join the bloc, which helps consolidate the rule of law, improve governance, and, most important, brings Western values to countries seeking accession. Borisov's myopia might leave him feeling powerful and increase his appeal with far-right, anti-Western voters—but blocking Republic of North Macedonia's chances of joining the EU threatens to destroy relations between the two friendly nations, could ignite broader regional instability, and, in fact, leaves both the Republic of North Macedonia and Bulgaria weaker.

Borisov's veto was rooted in the exploitation of historical differences as his government insisted that Brussels not recognize Macedonian as an official EU language. It also came on the 132nd day of mass anti-corruption demonstrations, at a time when the Bulgarian government is striving to shore up its domestic support, and North Macedonia is seen as an effective tool for achieving this. According to the Borisov government, Skopje must immediately accept that the Republic of North Macedonia, its language, and its culture are a Bulgarian derivative. Full stop.

The reasons for Borisov's unilateral veto are not just ill-timed and dangerous, they contradict his previously stated positions. In 2017, Borisov signed with his North Macedonian counterpart the historic Treaty on Friendship, which promised closer bilateral relations and, crucially, stated that Bulgaria would support the Republic of North Macedonia's EU accession. Now, Borisov's volte face risks isolating Bulgaria among EU member states, the majority of whom, including Germany, are eager to reward Skopje for its reforms and recent compromise with Greece in the form of the Prespa Agreement. But given the coronavirus crisis and its economic consequences, the EU's current expansionist sentiment may wane, which could invite political instability in Bulgaria's neighboring states in the Western Balkans, all of which are aiming for EU membership.

To resolve this mutually destructive impasse, the two governments should launch a clear process to implement the Treaty on Friendship. By establishing such a framework, each side could hold the other accountable while working toward the goals they both agreed to pursue nearly four years ago. For example, Bulgarians would have a forum to address any outstanding historical grievances, while North Macedonians would be able to engage with Bulgarians regarding the country's lack of a strategy for working with its neighbors in a pan-European context. In pursuing this path, Borisov would be re-engaging with a leader—North Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev—whose government has shown ample goodwill in resolving longstanding issues between the countries.

In many ways, Western Balkans stability—or lack thereof—hinges on whether Borisov chooses to engage with the Republic of North Macedonia and promote its EU ambitions.

While Bulgaria enjoys the benefits afforded to EU states, two of the five countries that border Bulgaria are stuck in EU accession purgatories. By definition, countries that vie for EU membership are seeking increased domestic stability, friendlier relations with other EU members, and increased chances at foreign

direct investment. Looking at Bulgaria's neighborhood, it is clear that each country in the region would benefit from more countries there joining the EU. This is especially true of the bilateral relationship between the Republic of North Macedonia and Bulgaria.

Brussels is careful to avoid adding members that cannot prove their own stability and the official initiation of North Macedonian membership to the EU would kick off a process in which Skopje would need to prove that it can meet EU governance, regulatory and financial standards. Just as other states across the globe promote stability in their region in order to entrench domestic placidity, increased North Macedonian stability would be an unqualified benefit for Bulgaria.

Should the Republic of North Macedonia join the EU, there also would likely be tangible benefits for Bulgaria. According to the most recent World Bank data, the Republic of North Macedonia is only Bulgaria's 17th largest export market. It's not hard to see how the Republic of North Macedonia's acceptance to the EU would lead to increased Bulgarian prosperity. Requisite market and governance reforms in the Republic of North Macedonia would make the country more accessible to foreign investors—including Bulgarians; the Republic of North Macedonia would have uninhibited market access to EU countries and vice-versa; and the Republic of North Macedonia would be eligible for EU funding that could be crucial for improving domestic and regional infrastructure. The result of these inevitabilities would be a wealthier Republic of North Macedonia that could then consume more Bulgarian goods.

The Republic of North Macedonia's elevation to the EU is also seen as a key that could unlock further EU integration. Other Balkan countries are in various stages of applying for EU membership as well. Like the Republic of North Macedonia's potential inclusion in the EU, those countries' joining the bloc would provide Bulgaria the same tangible economic benefits. The Republic of North Macedonia, though, is as close or closer than those countries to meeting EU standards and could provide the region with a blueprint for successful accession, if given the chance.

Resolving these issues, surely, will take time. A region as diverse as the Balkans is bound to have historical disputes, and both the Republic of North Macedonia and Bulgaria have much in their histories of which to be proud. Living in the past is a choice—one that benefits no one but those too proud to look to the future.

About *Tsvetan Tsvetanov* :

Tsvetan Tsvetanov is Chairman of the Republicans for Bulgaria, Chairman of the Euro-Atlantic Security Center (EASC) in Sofia, Bulgaria, and was Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria 2009-2013.

About *Pavel Valnev* :

Pavel Valnev is Deputy Chairman of Republicans for Bulgaria.

The views presented in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the views of any other organization.



THE BLOGS

Alex Benjamin

A Terror Fighter We Don't Know, But Should

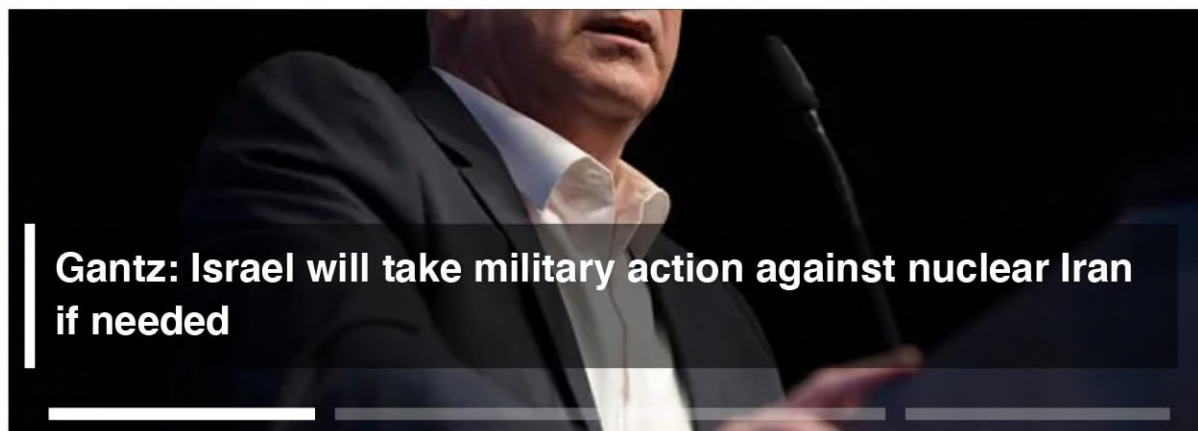
In Europe, life is finally getting tougher for Hezbollah. For decades the group has used the continent to stage and fund its terror attacks, and last year they started to face proper scrutiny in Europe's capitals. In 2020 alone, Austria, The Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Serbia and Slovenia all designated Hezbollah as a terror organization, banning the group from using their financial institutions and from setting foot in their respective jurisdictions.

These designations and actions are totally deserved. Hezbollah has left pools of blood across Europe, and across the globe, so few outside Tehran, Pyongyang and Beirut will kick up any stink about this effort to blacklist them.

In a year when Hezbollah's guns and bombs were thankfully quiet in Europe, it might seem strange that so many countries suddenly banned Hezbollah. Why Now?

THE TIMES OF ISRAEL





Good question. So, let's dig a bit deeper. These designations ultimately stem from years of thoughtful and incremental work towards banning Hezbollah from Europe. And one man in particular has been doing this leg-work, pushing, persuading and making the case. That man is Tsvetan Tsvetanov.

A former Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Tsvetanov knows firsthand the terror Hezbollah can export. You will remember that in 2012 a man boarded a bus full of Israeli tourists near Burgas, Bulgaria and detonated a bomb killing the Bulgarian bus driver and five Israeli tourists. The blast injured 35 more.

Serving as Bulgaria's Interior Minister at the time, Tsvetanov was tasked with investigating the attack. Working through Europol, Tsvetanov's probe quickly revealed that Hezbollah, without any shadow of doubt, was behind the bombing. The culprit known, Tsvetanov then led a campaign urging all countries to recognise, without equivocation, that Hezbollah murdered those six civilians on European soil. The ultimate goal of this campaign was to convince the European Union to label Hezbollah as a foreign terror organization, which would subject the group to the same punishments it now faces in the countries that banned it last year.

Early on, Tsvetanov's campaign gained traction. In the US the then-White House Homeland Security Advisor John Brennan supported Tsvetanov's push, as did 111 members of Congress who in a bipartisan letter thanked Tsvetanov

personally for his leadership on the matter. But the EU was, well, less enthusiastic.

Some EU member states, perhaps, feared retribution for acknowledging the truth. Others, maybe, feared retaliation from one of Hezbollah's allies, and perennial EU thorn in the side, Russia. But in the end, despite Tsvetanov's best efforts, Brussels only designated as a terrorist group Hezbollah's military wing, leaving Hezbollah's political leadership, which funds and organizes its militants, untainted.

Tsvetanov presented Brussels with a moral test, and the political leadership there, at the time, failed. While more than eight years have passed since the bombing, Tsvetanov's fight against Hezbollah, in many ways, is just beginning and the fruits of his labor starting to ripen.

During his time in government, Tsvetanov learned the value of transatlantic partnership and the importance of Israel's security in a world where so many nefarious forces instead focus on finding creative ways to threaten that country and its citizens. Now, Tsvetanov is tackling those challenges in the Bulgarian government through his newly formed political party, Republicans for Bulgaria, whose platform calls for tighter bonds with the EU, U.S. and Israel, and urges Sofia to resist sham partnerships with a belligerent Russia and China. Outside of Parliament, Tsvetanov Chairs the Euro-Atlantic Security Center (EASC) in Sofia, a non-governmental organization that works toward the same goals.

It is from these twin perches that Tsvetanov has successfully pushed for more countries to ban the group that brought terror to his country. And now with a change of Leadership in Washington, Tsvetanov is in even better situation to take on Hezbollah.

Remember that The Burgas attack occurring during the Obama administration. Tsvetanov has managed since then to forge many close relationships with

officials who have returned to high-ranking positions in the U.S. government. Unlike some European politicians, Washington's political leadership is not afflicted by the fear of Hezbollah, having designated them a terror group way back in 1997.

Like any government, the EU in 2021 will be forced to react to events beyond its control. But what Tsvetanov's years of work have shown is that Hezbollah is a deadly problem that can be confronted pre-emptively.

Washington's renewed transatlantic focus coupled with the growing anti-Hezbollah sentiment across central and eastern Europe must be built upon in Brussels while pre-emption is still an option.

With the golden opportunity presented by the Biden administration's stated aim to re-engage with its European allies, now is exactly the right time for Tsvetanov's seeds, planted back in 2012, to come into full bloom. Brussels, we are waiting.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alex Benjamin is the director of EIPA, a multi-disciplined pro-Israel advocacy Group based in Brussels, with offices in Paris and Berlin. He is also the Director of Public Affairs for EJA: European Jewish Association, a Brussels based NGO which represents and acts on behalf of Jewish communities across the EU and wider European continent, at the heart of the European Institutions and at bilateral level with Member States.



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

February 18, 2013

Tsvetan Gentchev Tsvetanov
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Interior
Bulgaria

Dear Minister Tsvetanov:

We are writing to express our support for your recent report on the 2012 Burgas bombing. Your comprehensive investigation builds a sound foundation for further action against Hizbollah, and we look forward to supporting you in your next steps.

The Bulgarian report demonstrates irrefutable evidence that Hizbollah was responsible for the Burgas bombing. There is now clear imperative for action. Hizbollah's actions in Europe must be met with a response to prevent further attacks in Europe and around the world.

The investigation of the Burgas bombing, coupled with the deep body of evidence and intelligence that supported the decisions by the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands to classify in its entirety Hizbollah as a terrorist organization, and action by the United Kingdom and Australia to place the "Hizbollah External Security Organization" on their terrorist lists, demonstrates an unmistakable path forward for the European Union to isolate Hizbollah over its support for terror and incitement.


Placing Hizbollah on the terrorist list would be the next logical step, in light of the terrorist attack on European soil. Blocking Hizbollah from fundraising would make it more difficult for Hizbollah to plan, finance and execute terrorist activities in Europe and around the world. We fear that failure to add Hizbollah to the terror list will allow, perhaps even encourage, the terror organization to exploit the lack of unity in the European Union Member States, and attempts to launch additional attacks on civilians. Furthermore, if Hizbollah's ability to maintain fundraising networks in Europe remains intact, this threatens to undermine the European Union's significant efforts towards Middle East peace.

We hope you will act to build the consensus among European Union members that is urgently needed to weaken Hizbollah's terrorist infrastructure. We look forward to working with you and your counterparts to increase engagement between the United States and the European Union to prevent future Hizbollah terrorist operations.

Sincerely,


Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress


Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



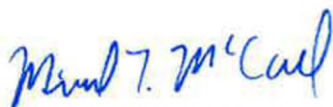
Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



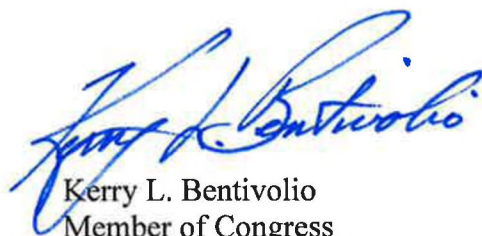
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress



Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress



Kerry L. Bentivolio
Member of Congress



Peter J. Roskam
Member of Congress



Kevin Brady
Member of Congress



Pete Olson
Member of Congress



Mike Pompeo
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress



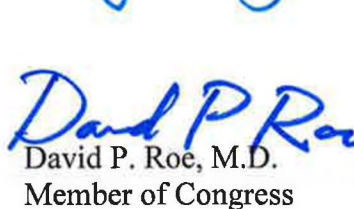
Randall M. Hultgren
Member of Congress



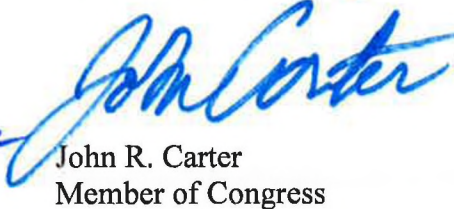
Peter T. King
Member of Congress



Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



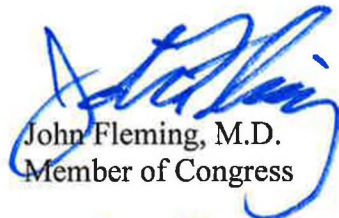
David P. Roe, M.D.
Member of Congress



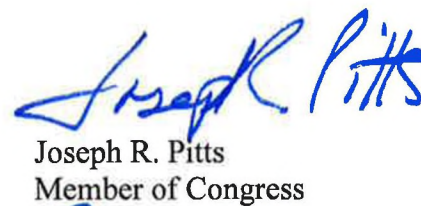
John R. Carter
Member of Congress



Tom Marino
Member of Congress



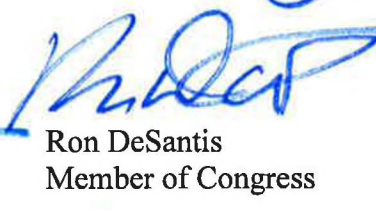
John Fleming, M.D.
Member of Congress



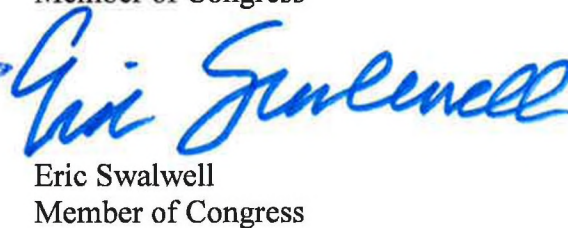
Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



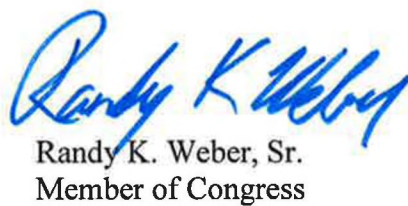
Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress




Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress



Randy K. Weber, Sr.
Member of Congress



Ted S. Yoho
Member of Congress



Dan Benishek
Member of Congress



Cynthia M. Lummis
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress



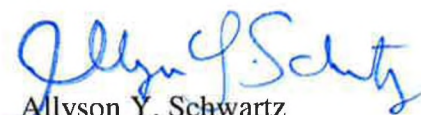
Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress



Trey Radel
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



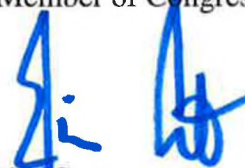
Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress



Tim Griffin
Member of Congress



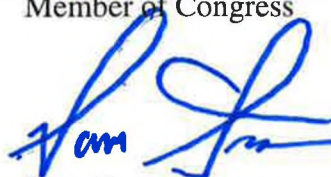
Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



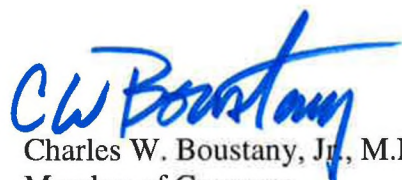
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Sam Graves
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



Charles W. Boustany, Jr., M.D.
Member of Congress



Jeff Fortenberry
Member of Congress



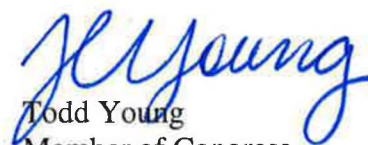
Mark Meadows
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



Todd Young
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



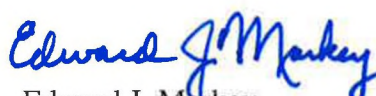
Ami Bera
Member of Congress



Patrick Murphy
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



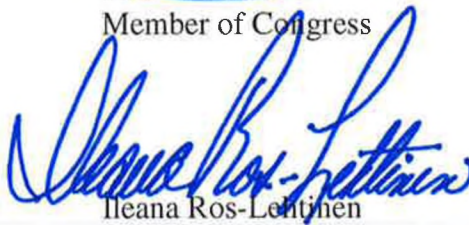
John L. Mica
Member of Congress



Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



Howard Coble
Member of Congress



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Steve King
Member of Congress



Jim Matheson
Member of Congress



Scott Garrett
Member of Congress



Jo Bonner
Member of Congress



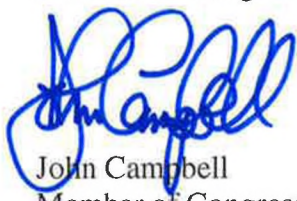
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Spencer Bachus
Member of Congress



Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress



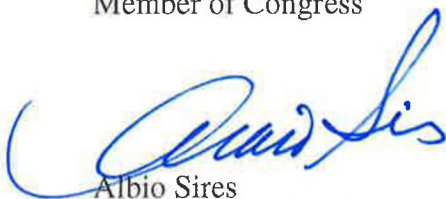
John Campbell
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Tim Murphy
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



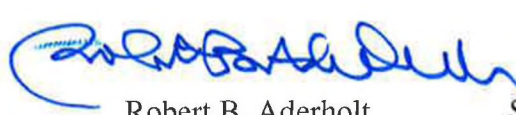
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress



Ed Whitfield
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Ted Poe
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

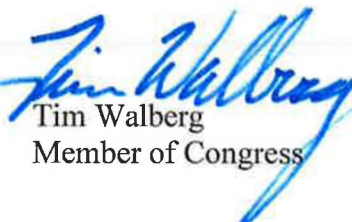
 

Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress

Lynn A. Westmoreland
Member of Congress



Trent Franks
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



Paul C. Broun, M.D.
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress




Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Gene Green
Member of Congress



Aaron Schock
Member of Congress



Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Rush Holt
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress




Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress



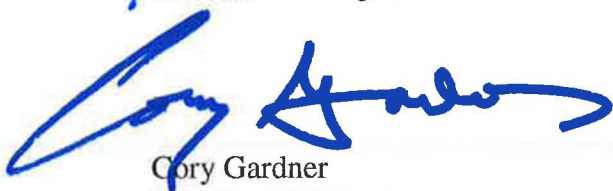
Joe Garcia
Member of Congress



Gary C. Peters
Member of Congress



Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress



Cory Gardner
Member of Congress



Mike Honda
Member of Congress



Frank Wolf
Member of Congress



Republicans
for Bulgaria

Tsvetan Tsvetanov



Tsvetan Tsvetanov is a Founder and Chairman of the Bulgarian center-right political party Republicans for Bulgaria. Tsvetanov is also the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Euro Atlantic Security Center (EASC) based in Sofia, Bulgaria. Since becoming involved in Bulgarian politics in 2005, Tsvetanov has been a prominent supporter and advocate of European and transatlantic values in Bulgaria and the region.

In June 2019, due to political differences with the leadership of his then political party Citizens for European Development for Bulgaria (GERB), mostly regarding the need to counter Russian influence in Bulgaria, Tsvetanov left GERB. He resigned as a Vice-Chairman of GERB and Majority Leader in the 44th Bulgarian National Assembly. During his time in the National Assembly 2009-2019, Tsvetanov was Chairman of the Internal Security and Public Order Standing Committee, as well as a member of the Control of the Security Services Standing Committee. In 2006-2009, he was Chairman of GERB and the driving force behind building the party's national infrastructure.

Throughout much of his career, Tsvetanov has focused on security, law enforcement, and defense matters. In 2009-2013, he was a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria. Tsvetanov's role in building and enhancing bilateral and multilateral relations has been widely recognized, earning him the: "White Cross of Merit to the Spanish Police" (2005); Silver Cross of Spanish Guardia Civil (2005); Certificate of Excellence from the EUROPOL Director for Excellent International Police Cooperation (2009); Honorary award for excellent service, given by the Minister of

office@republikanci.bg
www.republikanci.bg



**Republicans
for Bulgaria**

Interior of Lithuania (2009); Honorary Member of the Italian Carabinieri (2012) and International Association of Chiefs of Police (2015); and others.

On July 18, 2012, a Hezbollah terrorist attack took place at the Burgas Airport in Bulgaria. Five Israelis and 1 Bulgarian were killed. Tsvetanov, in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister, headed the investigation and coordinated international police cooperation that swiftly uncovered Hezbollah's role in the attack. As a result of the investigation and Tsvetanov's personal advocacy, the European Union (EU) designated the military wing of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

During his tenure as Minister of Interior 2009-2013, Tsvetanov led a law enforcement network composed of 50,000 personnel and a budget of almost 600 million euros. As Minister of Interior, he signed agreements with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on Passenger Name Records (PNR) and Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) data, as well as with the U.S. Department of Justice in the field of countering organized crime. He also worked closely with the leaderships of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Secret Service, and other U.S. government agencies and institutions.

In 2005-2009, Tsvetanov was a Deputy Mayor of Sofia whose portfolio included security matters in the Bulgarian capital.

He has been married for 27 years to his wife Desislava and they have three daughters.



Republicans
for Bulgaria

Republicans for Bulgaria

Republicans for Bulgaria (RFB) is a center-right political party established on September 27, 2020, in Sofia, Bulgaria. It is led by Chairman Tsvetan Tsvetanov and Deputy Chairman Pavel Valnev. Both are among the strongest advocates in Bulgaria in favor of the transatlantic relationship and the full integration of the Balkans into Euro-Atlantic institutions. On the basis of this philosophy, RFB advocates for the following:

Promoting Western values in Bulgaria. Of all the political actors in Bulgaria, RFB and its vision for the country aligns most closely with that of stakeholders in Washington, Brussels, Berlin, and other allied capitals. RFB is, therefore, rightly viewed as the principal promoter of Western values in Bulgaria.

Exercising Bulgarian leadership in the EU and NATO. RFB believes in a stronger and more active role for Bulgaria in the EU and the political and military structures of NATO.

Countering malign Russian influence. RFB seeks to safeguard Bulgaria's energy security, strongly opposing all Russian energy projects in Bulgaria, including Russia's Turkish Stream (or Balkan Stream) natural gas pipeline and Russia's construction of the Belene Nuclear Powerplant, which are tools of Russian influence over Bulgaria and the region.

Ending endemic corruption. RFB promotes full implementation of the rule of law and countering corruption in all forms, which continues to be among the biggest challenges for Bulgaria.

Modernizing the Bulgarian Armed Forces. RFB believes that Bulgaria must invest in and develop its military capabilities in order to be able to robustly contribute to the collective security of the transatlantic community. Chairman Tsvetan Tsvetanov has been one of the most vocal and persistent political leaders in Bulgaria calling for the country to purchase F-16 aircraft to increase interoperability with its NATO allies.

Integrating the Western Balkans into the West. Anchoring the countries of the Western Balkans into the EU and, most cases, NATO is among RFB's highest priorities. RFB Deputy Chairman Pavel Valnev is a dual U.S.-Bulgarian citizen and one of the most successful Bulgarian-origin entrepreneurs in the United States. Many of his commercial activities are focused on the development of the Western Balkans and preparing regional economies for full membership in the EU.

office@republikanci.bg
www.republikanci.bg